

## Message Text

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13-12

ACTION MED-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4831

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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TAGS: SNAR, CASC, SN

SUBJECT: ARRESTS OF AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS FOR ALLEGED NARCOTICS OFFENSE

S

REF: (A) SINGAPORE 4998; NOVEMBER 1975; (B) SINGAPORE 1252

1. SUMMARY: CURRENT ACTION BY CENTRAL NARCOTICS BUREAU TO QUESTION AND ADMINISTER URINALYSIS TESTS TO AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS IN CONNECTION WITH POSSIBLE NARCOTICS OFFENSES IS PRESENTLY CAUSING CONSIDERABLE CONCERN IN AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND MAY GENERATE SOME ADVERSE PUBLICITY IN EITHER LOCAL OR INTERNATIONAL PRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. REF A REPORTED GOS WAS ADOPTING LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN PENALTIES FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING. EMBASSY COMMENTED IN THAT MESSAGE THAT AS RESULT OF STEPPED-UP ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY AND CONTINUED USE OF NARCOTICS BY SOME AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS THAT DRUG ARRESTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS WERE LIKELY TO OCCUR. LEGISLATION DESCRIBED REF A WAS PASSED AND WENT INTO EFFECT DECEMBER 9, 1975.

WITH EMBASSY ENCOURAGEMENT, THE SINGAPORE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL (SACAC) AND OTHER AMERICAN

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COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ARRANGED FOR WARNING LETTERS

AND INFORMATION SHEETS ON THE NEW LAW TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING THE SINGAPORE AMERICAN SCHOOL. LETTERS WERE ALSO SENT BY THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL TO ALL AMERICAN COMPANIES SUGGESTING AMERICAN FAMILIES BEING SENT TO SINGAPORE FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH THEIR COMPANY BE CAREFULLY SCREENED TO ELIMINATE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS. APPROPRIATE BRIEFINGS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WERE HELD AT SINGAPORE AMERICAN SCHOOL.

3. IN LAST THREE WEEKS CNB HAS BEEN KEEPING LOCAL ESTABLISHMENTS WHERE DRUGS ARE PUSHED UNDER CLOSE SURVEILLANCE AND HAS PICKED UP FOR QUESTIONING PERSONS FREQUENTING THERE ESTABLISHMENTS. PRIOR TO MARCH 17 APPROXIMATELY NINE AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS HAD BEEN PICKED UP FOR QUESTIONING. THESE TEEN-AGERS WERE REQUIRED TO TAKE A URINALYSIS TEST. ONE WAS FOUND TO HAVE A TENTH OF ONE GRAM OF HEROIN IN HIS POSSESSION. ALL HAVE BEEN RELEASED UNTIL RESULTS OF TESTS ARE KNOWN AT WHICH TIME CASES WILL PRESUMABLY EITHER BE DISMISSED OR SPECIFIC CHARGES FORMALLY FILED. (SEVERAL OF THIS GROUP WERE HELD IN CUSTODY FOR SEVERAL HOURS OR EVEN OVERNIGHT BEFORE BEING RELEASED.)

4. AS RESULT OF RECENT ARREST OF ONE LOCAL TRAFFICKER USED BY SOME OF THE AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS, CNB HAS NOW IN ITS POSSESSION A LIST OF 47 NAMES WHICH INCLUDE APPROXIMATELY 15 AMERICAN STUDENTS CURRENTLY ATTENDING SAS. ON MARCH 17, CNB VISITED CAMPUS OF SINGAPORE AMERICAN SCHOOL AND PICKED UP ANOTHER 12 STUDENTS WHO WILL PRESUMABLY BE INTERROGATED AND REQUIRED TO TAKE A URINE TEST. CONSUL PETERSON IS AS OF THIS WRITING CALLING AT CNB TO PROVIDE WHATEVER PROTECTIVE SERVICE MAY BE APPROPRIATE.

5. TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLICITY IN LOCAL PRESS CONCERNING CNB ACTION AGAINST AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS BUT EMBASSY ASSUMES IT IS MERELY A QUESTION OF TIME BEFORE LOCAL OR INTERNATIONAL PRESS PICKS UP THE STORY. THIS PUBLICITY COULD INCLUDE ALLEGATIONS BY IRATE AMERICAN PARENTS TO EFFECT THAT CNB IS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AMERICAN CITIZENS AND THAT TEEN-AGERS ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO PHYSICAL BRUTALITY. (IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE SOME AMERICAN IN SINGAPORE MAY WRITE THEIR CONGRESSMAN TO THIS EFFECT.)

6. COMMENT: TO DATE GOS ACTION HAS BY NO MEANS BEEN LIMITED TO THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY. STUDENTS OF OTHER NATIONALITIES ATTENDING THE AMERICAN SCHOOL HAVE ALSO

BEEN ARRESTED. WE UNDERSTAND SOME ACTION HAS RECENTLY BEEN TAKEN AGAINST SOME STUDENTS ATTENDING THE UNITED WORLD COLLEGE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, HERETOFORE KNOWN AS THE SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL. RECENT ARRESTS OF AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS ARE PROBABLY MORE RELATED TO THE ARREST AND INTERROGATION OF A KEY LOCAL PUSHER (WHO KEPT RECORDS) USED BY A NUMBER OF AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE REPORTS THAT CNB OFFICERS MAY HAVE ROUGHLY HANDLED SOME AMERICAN STUDENTS, ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT CNB HAS TREATED AMERICANS LESS ROUGHLY THAN IT HAS ITS OWN NATIONALS. SO FAR, ANY ACCUSATIONS OF BRUTALITY COULD NOT BE SUBSTANTIATED BY UNBIASED OBSERVERS.

7. IF DEPARTMENT RECEIVES QUERIES FROM CONGRESSMEN, PRESS OR RELATIVES, FOLLOWING POINTS COULD BE MADE:

(1) GIVEN SIZE AMERICAN COMMUNITY PA SINGAPORE (C. 8000) AND AVAILABILITY OF NARCOTICS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AMERICAN STUDENTS ARE MIS- USING DRUGS.

(2) THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE TAKES A VERY SERIOUS VIEW OF THE DRUG PROBLEM AND IS VIGOROUSLY ENFORCING ITS NEW ANTI-NARCOTICS LAW, REGARDLESS OF THE NATIONALITY OF THE SUSPECTS.

(3) THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT GOS IS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST AMERICANS. PRESENT QUESTIONING AND TESTING IS PART OF A LARGER CAMPAIGN BY SINGAPORE TO CONTROL ITS OWN HEROIN EPIDEMIC (INVOLVING NO. 3 SMOKING HEROIN). OVER 1,000 HEROIN OFFENDERS WERE ARRESTED IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1975 AS COMPARED WITH ARRESTS OF ONLY 110 FOR ENTIRE YEAR OF 1974. GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT IS INEVITABLE THAT AS ARRESTS INCREASE SOME AMERICAN STUDENTS WOULD BE INVOLVED.

(5) APPROXIMATELY 20 OR MORE AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED AT VARIOUS TIMES AND PLACES AND HELD BRIEFLY FOR QUESTIONING AND THE TAKING OF URINE SAMPLES, BUT AS FAR AS THE EMBASSY KNOWS NO FORMAL CHARGES HAVE YET BEEN LODGED AGAINST ANY OF THEM.

(6) AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAS A PROGRAM TO COMBAT DRUG ABUSE:

(A) AMERICAN COMPANIES ARE URGED TO SCREEN OUT FAMILIES WITH POTENTIAL PROBLEMS FROM BEING ASSIGNED TO SINGAPORE. (B) SACAC HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR OVER TWO YEARS AND HAS BEEN PROVIDING DRUG COUNSELING

SERVICE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS REQUESTING IT AND HAS DEVELOPED A PROGRAM OF ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES TO KEEP TEEN-AGERS BUSY DURING THEIR REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR AND A SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE JOBS DURING THE SUMMER VACATION.

(7) ACCORDING TO CONFIDENTIAL SURVEYS TAKEN AT THE AMERICAN SCHOOL, AMERICAN TEEN-AGE USE OF HARD DRUGS APPEARS TO BE DOWN SOMEWHAT FROM A YEAR AGO. HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF STUDENT TEEN-AGERS WHO ADMIT IN THESE SURVEYS THAT THEY USE DRUGS.  
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